

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM MP US
SUBJECT: DRAFT HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN FOR MAURITIUS

REF: (A) STATE 139160 (B) STATE 143119

1. EMBASSY REGARDS DRAFT HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN FOR MAURITIUS
CONTAINED REFTEL B AS EXCELLENT AND WELL-WRITTEN. WE HAVE THE
FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS AND MINOR CHANGES.

2. IN FOURTH PARAGRAPH UNDER "A" THE PHRASE "WITH AUTOMATIC
COST-OF-LIVING INCREASED BUILT INTO ALL WAGE SCALES" SHOULD
BE ELIMINATED BECAUSE INACCURATE. SUCH INCREASES ARE GRANTED,
OFTEN AS A RESULT OF STUDY COMMISSIONS, BUT THEY ARE NOT
AUTOMATIC OR "BUILT IN." EDUCATION IS FREE THROUGH UNIVERSITY,
FOR THOSE ATTENDING UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS. GOVERNMENT
SUBSIDIES FOR ESSENTIAL FOODS LIKE RICE AND FLOUR COULD ALSO
BE MENTIONED, AS COULD SOCIAL SECURITY FOR ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED.
EMBASSY BELIEVES 1975 PER CAPITA GNP WAS \$500. IF \$580 FIGURE
USED, PERHAPS SOURCE SHOULD BE CITED. DOES EXISTENCE OF
SPECIAL SELF-HELP FUND PROGRAM MAKE INACCURATE THE STATEMENT
THAT THERE IS NO AID PROGRAM IN MAURITIUS?

3. EMBASSY NOTES THAT NO REFERENCE IS MADE IN REFTEL B TO
CORRUPTION, THOUGH REFTEL A INDICATES IT MAY BE DISCUSSED.

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PAGE 02 PORT L 00678 241326Z

ALTHOUGH IS IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION
IN MAURITIUS OR ELSEWHERE, AND IT IS PROBABLY NOT OF "SUCH A
NATURE THAT SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES ARE DIVERTED TOWARD THE
NATION'S ELITE AND AWAY FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION,"
THE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES CHANNELED INTO THE POCKETS OF
CERTAIN MINISTERS IN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT MAY BE NOTEWORTHY.
THE RESOURCES ACCUMULATED BY THESE MINISTERS AND SEVERAL OF

THOSE OF THE PREVIOUS LABOR GOVERNMENT WERE ENOUGH TO ENABLE THE FORMATION OF PERSONAL FORTUNES WHICH ARE SUBSTANTIAL BY MAURITIAN STANDARDS. THIS WAS EFFECTIVELY USED AS AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN ISSUE LAST YEAR, AND WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR BEHIND THE MMM'S VICTORY AT THE POLLS. SOME REFERENCE TO OFFICIAL CORRUPTION SHOULD PERHAPS BE MADE.

4. EMBASSY ALSO RECOMMENDS THAT THE FOLLOWING BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THE FIRST TWO SENTENCES UNDER PART B, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, OF REFTEL B: "IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT MAURITIUS WILL CONTINUE ON THIS EXEMPLARY COURSE. FORMED AFTER THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS, THE RULING LABOR/SOCIAL DEMOCRAT COALITION COMMANDS ONLY A RAZON THIN MARGIN. IN THE FACE OF A SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS RULE WHICH COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, RESULT FROM PROLONGED LABOR STRIFE IN KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS BY OPPOSITION MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) - CONTROLLED UNIONS, THE COALITION GOVERNMENT MIGHT SUSPEND CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION OR THROUGH USE OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT WHICH GIVES EXTRAORDINARY POWERS TO THE POLICE. AND IN THE EVENT OF A MMM TAKE-OVER, ITS COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IS OPEN TO DOUBT." THE REMAINDER OF THIS PARAGRAPH REQUIRES NO CHANGES.

KEELEY

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